

## Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

October 13, 2020

12:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

**PSC Commissioners Present:** Jeff Bachrach, Ben Bortolazzo, Mike Houck, Katie Larsell, Oriana Magnera, Steph Routh, Katherine Schultz (joined at 12:38 p.m.), Chris Smith, Eli Spevak [2 open positions]

**City Staff Presenting:** Andrea Durbin, Sandra Wood, Brandon Spencer-Hartle

**Guest Presenters:** Vivek Shandas, Fletcher Beaudoin, Paul Loikith (PSU)

### Documents and Presentations for today's meeting

*Chair Spevak* called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

*Chair Spevak:* In keeping with the Oregon Public Meetings law, Statutory land use hearing requirements, and Title 33 of the Portland City Code, the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission is holding this meeting virtually.

- All members of the PSC are attending remotely, and the City has made several avenues available for the public to watch the broadcast of this meeting.
- The PSC is taking these steps as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to limit in-person contact and promote social distancing. The pandemic is an emergency that threatens the public health, safety and welfare which requires us to meet remotely by electronic communications.
- Thank you all for your patience, humor, flexibility and understanding as we manage through this difficult situation to do the City's business.

### **Items of Interest from Commissioners**

*Commissioner Spevak:* Yesterday was Indigenous People's Day. the City adopted a Resolution last month. The land acknowledgement should be ready in early 2020, which we will begin to incorporate into the beginning of our meetings when it's confirmed.

*Commissioner Larsell:* One of the things about introducing meetings with an acknowledgement reminds us that we need to take care of the land in a more holistic way than we sometimes do.

*Commissioner Magnera:* This is an important conversation to have, and I'm happy to hear the City is working on this. Sometimes acknowledgements are too focused on the past. It's important to me to think about how we incorporate this into our work, particularly for planning projects based on lines that are superimposed on stolen land.

*Commissioner Routh:* It's serendipitous we're talking about this on the day the Historic Resources Code Project briefing is.

*Commissioner Houck:* All the natural resource decisions we make relate directly to this topic. Judy Bluehorse-Skelton at PSU has been working with Metro on PP&R projects. Climate adaptation and mitigation, focusing on native vegetation and that which is important to native populations are all included.

## **Director's Report**

Andrea Durbin

- We're interviewing Youth Candidates for the PSC opening next week. Ben, Lora Lillard, Sam Diaz, and I will be on the interview panel. We've extended the deadline for the non-youth position(s) until November 20. Please share the opportunity with your networks.
- Residential Infill Project was not appealed! CC2035 and the Comp Plan also have passed appeal and remand time periods. Thanks to BPS staff who have worked hard on the findings for these projects.
- Tree Code will be at Council on October 29 at 1 p.m. Time Certain. Eli will share the PSC letter and input then.
- River Plan / South Reach will be at Council on November 4 at 2 p.m. Time Certain. Mike Houck will present the PSC letter for this session.

## **Consent Agenda**

- Consideration of Minutes from the September 22, 2020, PSC meeting.
- R/W #8825: Proposed Vacation of Portions of NE 27th Ave and NE Holland St.

*Commissioner Smith* moved to approve consent agenda. *Commissioner Routh* seconded.

(Y8 – Bachrach, Bortolazzo, Houck, Larsell, Magnera, Routh, Smith, Spevak)

The consent agenda passed unanimously.

## **Historic Resources Code Update**

Briefing: Sandra Wood, Brandon Spencer-Hartle

### Presentation

Sandra introduced the legislative project (amendments to the Zoning Code). The PSC will probably work on this for 4-5 meetings, similar to other projects. The last time the PSC considered amendments to Historic Resources was in 2013. The driver behind this project is because the State changed their admin rules. Brandon has been working with the Landmarks Commission on the amendments and has briefed the PSC (concept development and previous draft). Today will be an orientation to historic resources overall and then we'll move into the specifics of this code project. Sandra introduced Brandon.

## Disclosures

Sandra asked if any PSC members live in an historic resource (landmark or district). *Chair Spevak* requested that, if commissioners are unsure, that they check their addresses on portlandmaps or ask staff if they're unsure before the October 27 hearing on this project.

Brandon recognized yesterday as Indigenous People's Day and noted historic procedures have told a white-dominant story. So the context of this project has been devoted to telling a very narrow portion of Portland's history. We need to think about whose histories are include, whose are not, and how we can adapt the changes as we go forward.

Portland's Historic Resources Program established in 1968, the second on the West Coast. Historic Landmarks Commission as established. Skidmore / Old Town area was particularly noted.

BPS manages historic resources policy framework. BDS performs quasi-judicial reviews of demolitions, alterations, additions, and new construction. And the Historic Landmarks Commission provides guidance and expertise and performs quasi-judicial reviews of large applications.

At the State level, Land Use Goal 5 relates to historic resources. This gives the City direction on how to maintain an historic resources program. Other details from the ORSs are noted on slide 4. The City information about the four different designations (historic, conservation, Historic Resources Inventory, and National Register) are noted on slide 5.

There are currently 735 Historic Landmarks, 12 Conservation Landmarks, 20 Historic Districts, 6 Conservation Districts, and 898 HRI-ranked resources in Portland.

About 4/5 of the land is in Districts. Brandon and Sandra walked through the demographics, profiles, and maps (slides 7-14). We are not proposing changing District lines in this proposal, but this is for background.

*Commissioner Schultz:* On the pie chart, I don't see R20 listed.

- Brandon: We don't have R20 in the districts based on the maps our GIS team ran. R20 for Landmarks is just a small handful, but land-size-wise, they are pretty big.

Brandon shared information about the full Historic Resources Program including past and upcoming work (slides 15-16).

*Commissioner Houck:* You mentioned landscape. Looking at the maps, things like Terwilliger Parkway and Ross Island fit into this, and I wonder if future work might look into these landscapes. 1903 Olmstead Plan and some of the landscapes that were recommended to be part of it. That historic document might be an interesting place to start from a landscape perspective.

- Brandon: There is a proposal to designate Terwilliger as an Historic Resource. I've been working with PP&R to see where this might overlay. We can think about what a set of protections might look like. We tend to think of historic designations for just buildings, but there are other opportunities, and I'm particularly thinking about East Portland... which might be murals or smaller structures.

*Commissioner Magnera:* What value does historic recognition add to a property? I'm curious about for conservation districts in particular.

- Brandon: Designation doesn't automatically change financial affect. But there are federal, state, and local benefits. Listed in National Register, you're able to get funds for Federal rehabilitation tax credits for commercial, adaptive reuse (e.g. White Stag Block). At the State level, there is a property tax incentive program.

*Commissioner Smith:* Residential Infill isn't going to be appealed. But testimony on this project notes some concern about district tools to weaponize against RIP-style development. Is that possible?

- Brandon: Land use regulations are overlaid on historic districts. As we've seen that proliferation, particularly in close-in eastside, we hope this project can help us have the right recognition process. Residential Infill Project was generally agnostic to historic and conservation districts. So these districts are not exempt from RIP-level density.

*Chair Spevak:* Can you give us an idea of staff time on this project on a geographic level?

- Brandon: I started in this role about 5 years. I feel like I've been building the plane as we're flying it. The necessity for staff to be involved in conservation/historic district applications, which sometimes blindsides staff. The land use affects took lots of my time.

*Commissioner Bachrach:* Historic districts – Portland has to have some form of demolition or we'd be free to regulate federally-recognized districts however we want to. Would that mean we could eliminate all design review for any housing in an historic district?

- Brandon: Not all historic districts were created equal. Before 1995, based on recommendations from the Planning and Landmarks commissions. As of 2017, State admin rule says the City has to protect new listings from demolition review. If Council decided all historic districts should only have demolition review, that would be compliant.

*Commissioner Magnera:* If we make the process of creating districts or landmarks more equitable (e.g. those important to Black communities), is it too late? E.g. on Mississippi and Albina. How do we assess what should have been done years ago? Is there a way to build in a reparative component?

- Brandon: This is where the public testimony will help inform the discussion. I'm bringing the most bureaucratic, technical items forward in the Proposed Draft. When the districts were created in 1993, the idea was that they would see less change. But since then, as the city has increased regulations on historic districts, we haven't done the same for conservation districts. What's happening today and in the future... and those areas where the resources are gone, so there isn't a permanent monument to connect to that history.

Historic Resources mean lots of things to lots of people. The Value Statements for the project are noted on slide 18 that we hope the code proposal will help advance. The necessity is to amend the code to make it work better for more people.

The project's Equity Goals are noted on slide 19, and outreach and engagement activities thus far are noted on slide 20. We've heard from about 1000 people so far.

Sandra provided an overview of the themes of the project. Volume 1 on page 7 gives an overview of the proposal. Volume 2 is the code and commentary. There are 5 themes:

1. Identification
2. Designation
3. Protection
4. Reuse

## 5. Administration

Brandon walked through the details of the themes. There has been confusion about historic districts are defined in the Zoning Code. So we are looking to better describe and define to give clarity through this project. We will aim to have a clear hierarchy of historic resource types addressed in the code and remove Zoning Code provisions pertaining to Unranked Resources.

There are 5 components we expect to receive lots of testimony about:

- Proposal 2.b –revising the criteria and procedures for locally designating, amending and removing City landmark and district status.
- Proposal 3.a. – applying demolition review to City-designed landmarks and contributing resources in City-designated districts. Expand demolition review approval criteria based on level of designation.
- Proposal 3.b. – increasing exemptions to historic resource review for all designated resource types.
- Proposal 3.c. – refining historic resource review approval criteria.
- Proposal 4.b. – increasing code incentives for adaptive reuse.

*Commissioner Bachrach:* Thanks for the work staff has done. I'm finding lots of confusing muddle in the code, and I think it needs some editing. I'll send an email with more details. For Ranked Resources today, there is a small regulatory process; I thought there weren't any regulatory stipulations. It's contrary to ORS and admin rules to not give property owners the right to object in being designated a significant resource. I have questions and policy concerns about what we're doing with districts and the limited exemptions for design, and I think they need to be broader.

*Commissioner Larsell:* I'm interested in earthquake safety and if there's a link to that for vulnerable historic buildings.

*Commissioner Bortolazzo:* Elements that could be taken care of outside of Title 33 – I'm interested in suggestions about that/those.

*Commissioner Houck:* A friend built an ADU in Irvington, and her house is non-contributing. She did run into a number of issues and requirements and objections from a neighbor.

*Commissioner Magnera:* I am interested in the cultural designation to preserve businesses that are key to specific communities. I think you'll also hear some follow-up about how we build reparative components into this work. I'm concerned we'll actually hear from many BIPOC communities.

*Chair Spevak:* In the PAALF Plan, I'm wonder if staff has reviewed and thought about future work on this topic and project.

Please email additional questions to staff.

## Climate & Land Use

Briefing: Vivek Shandas, Fletcher Beaudoin, Paul Loikith (PSU)

### Presentation

Andrea introduced the topic as a next step from the presentation we had at the PSC over the summer about climate adaptation work. Today we're thinking about how the PSC can further climate goals via the tools we use. This is the first of what we see as many conversations to build our understanding and building climate goals through our PSC work.

Fletcher introduced the PSU commitment and connection to the city.

Dr Loikith is an associate professor in the department of geography at Portland state University and the director of the PSU climate science lab, which is a team of PSU students, researchers, and faculty dedicated to advancing our scientific understanding of weather, climate variability, and climate change in Portland and beyond. His Phd is from Rutgers university and research focuses on weather and climate extremes and climate change science. His research has been applied to inform work being done within the Portland water bureau and the bureau of environmental services.

Dr Loikith gave an overview and background about phenomena: temperature, precipitation, and smoke/heat combined events.

Regarding temperature:

- Projections of future warming using a high-end emissions scenario (little or no global mitigation), show more warming in the summer than in other seasons in the Portland area.
- Winter, spring, and summer show about 2-3 degrees F of warming by 2050 (we're already on the way).
- Summer warming shows about 3-4 degrees F of warming by 2050 (we're already on the way).

Portland is in-between on areas that are expected to warm more or less.

Precipitation:

- Portland has seen little to no change in precipitation over the historical record, with an exception of spring showing a modest long-term increase.
- Portland's rainfall is dominated by large year-to-year variability rather than systematic trends towards a wetter or drier climate
- Climate models generally project a small increase in winter rainfall by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Summer is projected to get drier, but summer is already very dry.
- Little to no change projected for fall and spring.

Smoke/heat combined events:

- The weather patterns that are conducive to wildfire smoke in Portland are often also conducive to heat.
- This is because most fires are inland of Portland. So when we get smoke, we have winds that are not from the Pacific and therefore are likely to be warm.

- Because smoke events in Portland are often associated with heat, and wildfire activity is projected to continue increasing, the co-occurrence of heat and smoke will likely become more common.

A summary of climate change impacts is shown on slide 18.

PSU's work with BES and PWB has included:

- Project with BES used machine learning to understand the weather patterns that lead to combined sewer overflows in Portland.
- Project with PWB used a similar approach to understand weather patterns that lead to both heavy rainfall and prolonged dry periods in Bull Run. Looks at how patterns are projected to change under future climate change.

Dr Shandas noted that Portland is poised to be in a position to move interesting and important work in this area. The CAP 2020 and working with DLCD to work through the executive order from the governor are promising. The way Portland grows will lend itself to how we manage heat and climate stressors.

We're talking about climate-induced stressors with on-the-ground land use, who's living in different areas, and impacts... e.g. zoning and urban heat island effects. We have to ask questions about creating density without increasing the heat island effects in different streetscape scenarios (slides 25-26 for examples).

Greening may not work across all scenarios, but there are affects we can try to play out in different ways. Climate change in the form of urban heat also impacts communities differently. In Portland, we've learned that those living in the hottest parts of the city have less formal education, and limited English proficiency, and live in neighborhoods with higher racial diversity and extreme poverty. Racially white communities are more likely to have air conditioners, while children are less likely. So these are serious equity considerations.

*Commissioner Houck:* The data suggests we will have intense rain events, but BES has asserted increasing intense events, which is contrary to what we heard today. I'll follow up via email with further questions.

*Commissioner Schultz:* On the different neighborhoods and greening, you have a toggle for roof albedo. Is there an option for ecoroofs, etc?

- Dr Shandas: If you're looking to improve the ambient environment for walking, we haven't seen much of an effect of human ground-level exposure from ecoroofs. But you do see this from satellite.

*Commissioner Bachrach:* Is anyone trying out programs to subsidize air conditioners for under-served communities?

- Dr Shandas: There are lots of programs to get the short-term benefit of AC. But this seems like a band-aid to a systemic issue. Temperatures are going to continue to rise. This is something we need to work on at a base level.

*Chair Spevak:* Opportunity to reduce heat island on private property versus in the right-of-way?

- Dr Shandas: The majority of land is in private land, but it will depend on the property owner of the parcel. For multi-family, negotiating that with property owners becomes much more difficult and more than just a free tree give-away.

*Commissioner Magnera:* Outdoor and indoor air quality and the concurrence of poor air quality and impacts on health. Shared a map that was created for the Zero Cities project about urban heat relief and the concentration in inner-ring areas.

*Commissioner Houck:* Jeff's question is at the heart of this discussion. Anyone who wishes on is entitled to an air conditioner but solving the urban heat island issue with air conditioners is counter to where the city should be going in the context of the PSU presentation. It's a question of structural engineered solutions versus focusing on increasing our reliance on green infrastructure – Fletcher, we have been talking about the work about this for two to three years with BES's Green Infrastructure initiative. I'd like to further discuss that at our next discussion. There are options outside of high-intensity, high energy use AC versus alternative green infrastructure options such as urban forest canopy and building design.

## **Adjourn**

*Chair Spevak* adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Submitted by Julie Ocken